United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/895
22 May 1991

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General recommends that mandate of United Nations Angola Verification Mission be renewed and enlarged.

- Experts complete first on-site inspection of Iraq's nuclear capabilities as authorized by Security Council.

- Iraq protests against Security Council decision to let Iraqi oil exports pay for war damages caused by that country during Gulf war.

- United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees offers its assistance to four Palestinians from Gaza Strip who are expelled to Lebanon by Israel.

- 1991 Human Development Report says financial resources can be found to provide human development for all.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar has recommended to the Security Council that the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM) be enlarged and extended to enable the Mission to verify the new cease-fire.

In a report to the Security Council, dated 20 May, the Secretary-General said the enlargement of the force was in response to the Peace Accords for Angola which were agreed on 1 May by the Government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). The cease-fire and the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angolan territory are expected to take effect by the end of the month.

By entrusting the main tasks to the parties themselves, costs to the international community would be reduced at a time when there was an ever-growing demand for funds for peace-keeping, he said.

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For information media—not an official record

The first team of international experts to visit Iraq under the terms of the Security Council cease-fire resolution of 3 April has just completed its initial work and is back in Vienna.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) last week carried out the first inspection in Iraq with the assistance and cooperation of the Special Commission established under the resolution. The inspection involved a team of 34 experts, which included nationals from 19 countries.

Following the initial inspections, the Agency is charged with developing and carrying out a plan for the destruction, removal or rendering harmless of all nuclear-weapons-usable material.

The Agency said the Government of Iraq had cooperated fully and had complied with all requests of the IAEA team during the inspections.

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Iraq has protested against the decision of the Security Council to establish a Compensation Fund -- financed by Iraq's oil exports -- to pay for war damages caused by Iraq during the Gulf war.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 20 May, Iraqi Ambassador Abdul Al-Anbari said the Council had violated the norms of international law by not asking the United States and its partners to compensate Iraq for the damage and destruction inflicted on Iraq during the war.

He said Iraq had been suffering from a full economic embargo since last August in addition to the destruction as a result of the air war and was in need of many times its oil revenue in order to meet the urgent requirements of reconstructing the country.

For that reason, the Ambassador said, Iraq had requested a moratorium of five years, during which no part of its limited oil revenues would be appropriated, in order to enable it to provide basic requirements for the Iraqi people. By ignoring that request, he said, the Council was failing to respect the right of life of the Iraqi people.

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The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has offered its assistance to four Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, including two UNRWA staff members, who were expelled to Lebanon by the Israeli authorities on Saturday, 18 May.

The UNRWA deplored the expulsion of the four men, who are all Palestine refugees registered with the Agency, and two of whom are UNRWA employees.

Meanwhile, Lebanon has condemned the expulsion of the Palestinians to Lebanese territory. In a letter to the Secretary-General of 20 May, the Permanent Representative of Lebanon, Khalil Makkawi, objected to the violation

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by Israel of the Lebanese sovereignty and territory, saying the move was counter to the United Nations Charter, as well as human rights norms and Security Council resolutions.

In a similar letter, the Palestine Observer Mission has also protested against the deportations. The Deputy Permanent Observer of Palestine, Riyad Mansour, said Israel should be made to ensure the safe and immediate return of all the expelled Palestinians to their homes.

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Lack of political will -- not financial resources -- is the real cause of human neglect, according to the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), William H. Draper III.

Speaking to the press today in Washington, D.C. at the inauguration of the Human Development Report 1991, he said the report had broken new ground last year by ranking countries by a Human Development Index which rated national success in terms of life expectancy, adult literacy and purchasing power.

Mr. Draper said the importance of the report was that it showed that the financial resources to provide basic services for all could be found if priorities were recast.

For the first time, the UNDP report ranks countries on a Human Freedom Index, which ranks countries according to 40 measures of liberty, such as press freedom, multi-party elections and right to travel and assembly. Sweden and Denmark headed the Human Freedom Index list, with Iraq at the very bottom.

The report is critical of developing countries for not spending enough on areas of urgent human needs. In Angola, Chad, Pakistan, Peru, Syria, Uganda and Zaire, for example, arms spending is at least double the amount spent on health and education.

Donor countries are not above criticism. They allocate a mere .03 per cent of their gross national product (GNP) for foreign aid -- well below the .7 per cent targeted by the international community.

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